

Tale Feathers

November
2007

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Number 8

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....and MORE!!

Be sure to visit our
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Calling All New (and Old) Members St. Louis Audubon Open House

Tuesday, November 20, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.
Powder Valley Nature Center

New member or life-long, bring yourself and bring a friend and find out just what we've been up to lately.

Yes, as most people know, we're big on birds. But what does that **really** mean, and is there more? Did you know that during the 2006/2007 school year, our volunteers presented educational programs to over 2,000 students, or that we offer programs as diverse as birds and bats, owls and rivers? Come hear, see, and feel just what we're all about—from field trips, to bird monitoring, to classroom programs, to conservation advocacy, and much, much more. Meet the people that make it happen and find out if there's something interesting for you. Bring along that friend or relative that looks at you sideways when you say, "Audubon." Whether you're new, been around for years, or haven't even joined, we guarantee you'll learn **something** new about St. Louis Audubon!

From the intersection of Interstates 44 & 270, take Watson Rd. to Geyer Rd. Turn north on Geyer and cross the bridge to Cragwold Road on your left. Go west on Cragwold for 1 mi. to nature center entrance on right. Follow drive to parking lot. Enter building through left entrance.

Questions, call Cathy Devine at 314-962-3460 or Mitch Leachman at 314-739-5112.



St. Louis Audubon Society

Opportunities

and

Announcements

Mission Statement of The St. Louis Audubon Society

Help our community
sustain biological
Diversity through
Nature.

Goals
To foster an aware-
ness and under-
standing
Of birds and other
wildlife and their
habitats

To educate our com-
munity so people
can make
informed decisions
about the natural
world.

AUDUBON SOCIETY LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS

The St. Louis Audubon Society announces a training class that is starting up for their speaker's bureau in their elementary education program. The speakers will be available free to schools and will cover topics ranging from birds to bats to plants.

"We are truly excited about this program. Environmental education is a big part of what Audubon is all about and what better place to start than at the elementary level," said local chapter president,
Torrey Berger.

St. Louis Audubon Society, with 2,200 members, has a local focus on education, conservation and habitat restoration. It annually participates in Operation Clean Stream, conducts monthly general interest meetings, bird walks and song and shore bird habitat reclamation and restoration.

Applications are now being accepted for the January, 2008 class. Training will be a total of 10 hours.

Call Vicki Flier for applications or more information at 314-968-9166.

Walks in Forest Park

St. Louis Audubon Society Board Members, Lynne Breakstone and Jim Wilson, will continue to lead beginning bird walks on the first Saturday of every month. As long as the weather stays warm enough, walks will be

outdoors; we will meet in front of the Education and Visitor Center (5595 Grand Dr.) at 8:30, and we will bird for approximately 2 hours. Kindly RSVP to Anne Grossman at (314) 367-7275, ext. 14 or email to

agrossmann@forestparkforever.org.

Dates for Nov and Dec are Sat. Nov. 3, and Dec. 1.

All ages and birding levels welcome.

Binoculars Wanted

The Saint Louis Audubon Society is partnering with Birders' Exchange, a nonprofit organization that helps get equipment for ornithological field research to scientists in Central and South America. We are looking for donations of new and used waterproof binoculars and scopes, tripods, backpacks, and field guides covering South America, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Donations can be given to any Saint Louis Audubon field trip leader, or can be dropped off at the Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center in Kirkwood, Missouri. If you have any questions about making a donation please call Eric Jeltz 314-210-3404.

November & December

Bird Walks & Trips

John Solodar

November 3, Saturday – Horseshoe Lake area – Paul Bauer will lead this trip to Horseshoe Lake and some surrounding areas. We'll hope to find various ducks, gulls, wintering sparrows and whatever else may be coming through. We'll start at 8:00 AM for this half day trip.

November 10, Saturday – Central Missouri Field Trip to Columbia MO. Birding Areas - The Columbia MO. area has many excellent and active birders. We hear and read about their birding areas such as Bradford Farms, Eagle Bluffs, the Katy Trail, Little Dixie, Rock Bridge State Park., etc. The goal of this field trip is to familiarize St. Louis birders with these birding areas at a time when we can possibly see the Smith's Longspurs and other migrating sparrows at Bradford Farms.

The group will meet at 6:00 am and caravan in combined cars to Bradford Farms, where we will be met by some of the Columbia birders that are familiar with the birding spots in the area. We hope to bird Bradford Farms and the surrounding area till lunch time, and then we will travel to other birding areas such as Eagle Bluffs, the Katy trail, etc. We will depart Columbia to return to St. Louis around 4:30 -5:00 pm. Weather permitting, we will have some hikes, so participants should wear comfortable shoes and wear appropriate clothing for the temperature.

Please e-mail (pllueders479@aol.com) or call Pat Lueders (314-961-6614) after October 16th if you plan on joining our group so that she can tell you where to meet.

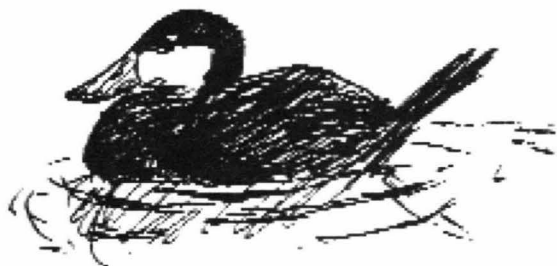
November 14, Wednesday – This will be the second of our Wednesday trips this season. Torrey Berger and John Solodar will co-lead this one which will take place at Riverlands starting at 9:00 AM. This will also feature a **BEGINNERS** section that will go off on its own, separate from the main trip. Expect a lot of ducks, swans, gulls and other birds.

November 17, Saturday – Busch/Weldon Spring - Mike Thelen and John Solodar will co-lead this trip that starts at 8:00 AM. We hope for an infusion of winter migrants, especially waterfowl and sparrows, maybe some nuthatches and purple finches as well. This trip is designed to last until noon or so, but Mike, especially, likes to go much longer so being lunch if you want to continue on with him. If you have to leave early that's OK too.

Dec 5, Wednesday – Horseshoe Lake Area – Another trip to Horseshoe Lake close by in Illinois provides a good opportunity to see the later winter arrivals as well as to search for more of the birds that might have arrived earlier. Pat Lueders will lead this trip which will cover a variety of birding places on and near Horseshoe Lake. Meet Pat at 8:00 AM.

December 15, Saturday – Riverlands – Winter has really set in and Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary is perhaps our prime winter birding area. Mike Thelen knows the area very well and he will be leading this trip which will undoubtedly include some time at the Jones Confluence Park. This trip starts at 9:00 AM and is officially listed as ½ day, but Mike tends to go much longer so bring a lunch and water with you if you plan to stay out longer. Also, dress warmly and bring some of those hunter's hand and foot warmers.

(Directions and additional info continued on next page).



How to get there

Busch Conservation Area - Take U.S.40/I-64 west into St. Charles County. Take Hwy 94 south from U.S. 40 about 1 mile to the traffic light at Hwy D. Turn right and go about 1.5 miles to the entrance on the right. Turn left at the "T" to Hampton Lake and meet in the parking lot.

Horseshoe Lake - Take I-70 east across Poplar Street ridge. Exit at Highway 111 (exit 6) and turn left. Go north a few miles to the Horseshoe Lake State Park entrance (on left). Meet at the first parking lot on the right.

Riverlands - From the northern loop of I-270 take Hwy 367 north. The designation changes to Hwy 67 after a while, but continue straight ahead. Take Hwy 67 to the last exit before the Clark Bridge over the Mississippi River. Turn right here past the Fisca station and take the next right, Wise Rd, to the parking lot next to Teal Pond.

USFWS Urban Bird Conservation Treaty Program Update

- Sue Gustafson

The St. Louis Urban Bird Conservation Treaty Program, a Cooperative Agreement program between the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) and St. Louis Audubon Society, provided funding for habitat restoration at two more area parklands recently. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) provided a large portion of the program funding that made these projects possible.

NFWF provided funding of \$22,000 to St. Louis County Parks for the purchase of vegetation to establish five acres of mesic woodland on the west perimeter of **Creve Coeur Lake County Park** in addition to plantings for twenty acres of upland prairie that will serve as a transition between the marsh and mesic woodland. The woodland will provide a wildlife corridor and screening from potential development to the west of the park.

FWS and NFWF provided funding of \$19,300 to **Tower Grove Park** for the purchase of over two hundred native trees and shrubs. Tower Grove Park suffered extensive damage from the storm of July 2006, and these new plantings will help replace trees lost in the storm that provided excellent cover and foraging for resident and migratory birds.

Both of these parks have been designated as Important Bird Areas. St. Louis Audubon has enjoyed working with **Dennis Hogan** of St. Louis County Parks and **John Karel** of Tower Grove Park in implementing these habitat enhancement projects that will be of benefit to birds and other wildlife.



Cooper's Hawk investigating children's yard toys. Photo submitted by Dave Faintich

Education Team Report

Vicki Flier

We had a terrific September. We made presentations to ten classes consisting of 157 students and 14 adults. Total number of people in attendance to date is 169 children and 20 adults. It is so rewarding talking to these kids and passing along our enthusiasm for nature. We try to leave on a positive, upbeat note. We always ask what they the student can do to help the environment. It is interesting to see what they are thinking because as Art Linkletter said, "kids say the darndest things." A good example was last year when someone wrote "thank you for showing us a bird on a stick. I learned a lot."

This month we went to the STOM (Science Teachers of Missouri) Convention and presented a program on the Great Backyard Bird Count. We will present the same program on December 5th at Meramec and again on January 19th at Powder Valley. This program helps teachers teach the scientific process to classrooms using bird feeding as a conduit.

So far in October we have 15 programs on the calendar. If anyone is interested in shadowing our talks to see if you might be interested in joining our group please call for our schedule and join us. In January we will have a formal training session consisting of two nights of presentations on our programs with some hints on conducting your own classroom session. At the November 20th general meeting we will do a short presentation on using "bird-on-stick."

We are teaching a class on Raptors for the St. Louis Community College at Meramec in October. It will fulfill a requirement for the Master Naturalist Certificate awarded by Meramec. When a Master Naturalist certified volunteer is working, you can have your supervisor at the qualified organization sign off on our log sheet and you will receive a Volunteer Award at the Annual meeting in April. Call me for more information.

The Master Naturalist certificate consists of twelve courses six college credit classes and six continuing education seminars on a variety of related subjects. The goal would be to pass on that information to others in any nature related organization not specifically St. Louis Audubon Society. Unlike other organizations, with the Meramec certificate you don't have to go out and work or volunteer. But, heck, we have so much fun why wouldn't you!

Chickadee checking out a nest box.
Photo submitted by Dave Pierce.

Ninth Annual Forest Park Kennedy Woods Honeysuckle Removal November 10

Mark your calendars! Help us with **hands-on bird habitat restoration** at Forest Park. This year we'll be tackling the 16 acre Successional Forest just west of the Jewel Box..

Date: Saturday, November 10

Time: Two shifts - 10:00 a.m. to noon and noon to 2:00 p.m.

Place: Meet on Carr Drive.

From I-40 exit at Hampton (North), then turn right on Wells Drive.

Follow the curve to the left, and take the left fork, which is Carr.

See www.treeswallow.com for a map and additional info.

Bring: Cutting tools (long-handled loppers, small saw), gloves.

Thanks, and we hope to see you there!

The Kennedy Woods Advisory Group

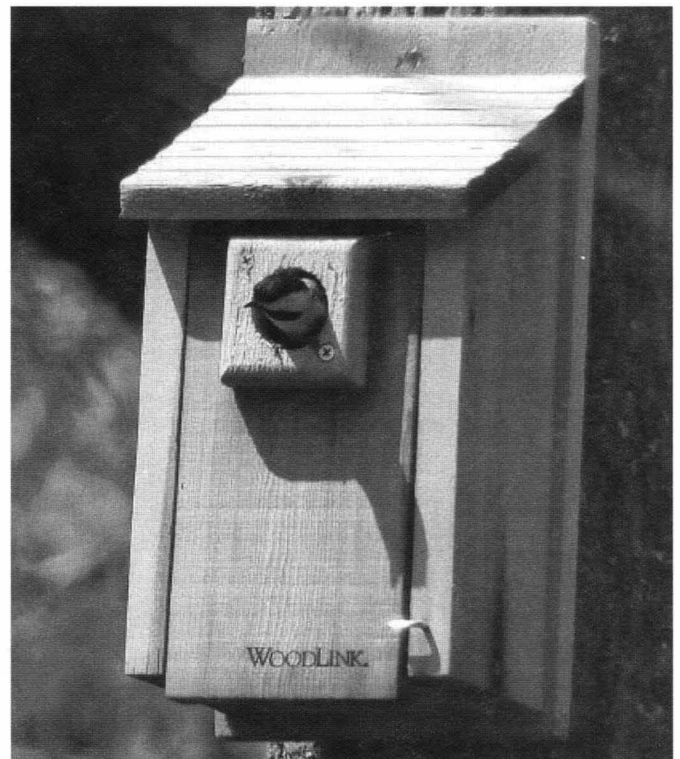
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Yikes! *We're Surrounded...*By Invasive Plants, Insects, and Animals!

At the Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative Conference in August experts and biologists from throughout Missouri spoke about the on-going challenges of invasive species in our state. The presenters included representatives from the Missouri Department of Conservation, Conservation Federation of Missouri, Department of Natural Resources, Missouri Department of Transportation, Missouri Department of Agriculture, and Litzinger Road Ecology Center. We are fortunate that our state provides many resources for solutions that can help maintain native species diversity. On display were various attention-getting 50's-type "Ivasion" posters and handouts, examples of the educational tools that are being distributed throughout the state.

Did you know that 18% of the plants in our midwest National Parks are non-native? Many of these are highly invasive, and the percentage is even larger along roadsides and other disturbed areas. Invasive plants, such as purple loosestrife, Russian olive, common reed, water milfoil, and bush honeysuckle are detrimental because they crowd out native systems. Native vegetation is preferred because it supports a larger variety of species than areas infested with non-native plants.

It's a myth that it's possible to contain plantings of invasives in an urban yard. Our birds, rainwater, shoes, clothing, and tires can carry seeds out of an area quite easily. So be cautious and plant natives. At www.grownative.org you can find native alternatives that will be lovely, as well as low-maintenance, and will attract an interesting balance of insects, birds, and butterflies to your yard.

On the animal front, of concern in recent years is the increasing number of feral hogs that have been reported in many counties in Missouri. These wild boars are dangerous and cause a lot of damage, including rooting and wallowing the land, infecting domestic hogs with swine diseases, competing for the acorn crop, and impacting ground nesting birds. The problem persists because of individuals who release them for the sport of hunting. These animals can't be easily contained, and no responsibility is taken for the resulting damage that follows.

Another problem facing our native species is invasive "hitchhiking" bugs, fish, and mussels. The emerald ash borer is well established in Missouri now, and Asian carp and zebra mussels are in our Lake of the Ozarks. It's predicted that the gypsy moth, which affects oak trees, will eventually make its way to Missouri from the Northeast.

One thing we can do is clean our shoes and water equipment before and after exploring and traveling to other areas, lakes, and streams. Don't transport firewood from other states. Check out the websites below to learn more about the threats of non-natives and how we can help control them. Try to prevent an invasion from infesting *your* yard or *your* local and National Parks.

Karen B. Meyer
Vice President of Conservation
St. Louis Audubon Society

www.mdc.mo.gov/nathis/exotic/
www.MIPN.org
www.mda.mo.gov

Intimidation Factor

By Eric B. Jelts

So how can birds that weigh only 40 grams intimidate a full grown 175-pound man? I have only one word for you...WARBLERS.

They are little, yellow (might need some nuprin), show up seasonally, have a habit of not sitting still, and I'd rather not talk too much about juveniles. For years I had avoided them and the hair pulling/fall-out insanity that would surely arise by attempting to identify them in the field. There are over 60 species of New World Wood Warblers that are found in the United States. Books have been written containing nearly 700 pages on how to accurately identify them. For those of you keeping score, that's almost 12 pages per species. If that isn't a daunting task I'm not sure what is.

Fear not fellow birder, all is not lost! "*Carpe Diem!*"

Like most everything else in this world nothing comes easy and takes a bit of practice. Even a guy who didn't notice that his wife had put out a giant orange flag in front of our house (next to the door), for Halloween last year is starting to figure out these little buggers. There are several warbler hot-spots around Saint Louis, and on any given day there is a good chance of there being an experienced birder on the scene that is usually happy to share their knowledge and call out the little birds as they flit through the tree tops. Nothing to me is more rewarding than knowing you just accurately identified a warbler that was bouncing around at the top of a 100 foot tall Sycamore. Over time you start to get familiar with the intricacies, and before you know it you are able to help new birders spot and identify warblers.

So the moral of the story is don't let little, yellow birds intimidate you. Save that for the big yellow one from Sesame Street.



Black-Throated Green Warbler photo submitted by Dave Pierce.

Tale Feathers

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St. Louis Audubon Society 2007 - 2008

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